COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PENPOTENTIARIES OF THE UNITED STATES CHARGED WITH NEGOTIATING PEACE WITH GREAT BRITAIN

SP.CL.
E
358
U58

LIBRARY
BROCK UNIVERSITY

[6]

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

COMMUNICATIONS

FROM THE

PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF THE UNITED STATES

CHARGED WITH

NEGOTIATING PEACE WITH GREAT BRITAIN;

SHOWING THE

CONDITIONS ON WHICH ALONE THAT GOVERNMENT

IS

WILLING TO PUT AN END TO THE WAR.

October 10, 1814.

Referred to the committee of foreign relations.

WASHINGTON CITY:

PRINTED BY ROGER C. WEIGHTMAN.

1814.

174713

To the senate and house of
representatives of the United States.

I lay before congress communications just received from the plenipotentiaries of the United States, charged with negotiating peace with Great Britain; showing the conditions on which alone that government is willing to put an end to the war.

The instructions to those plenipotentiaries, disclosing the grounds on which they were authorised to negotiate and conclude a treaty of peace, will be the subject of another communication.

JAMES MADISON.

Washington, October 10th, 1814.

DOCUMENTS.

Copy of a letter from Messrs. Adams, Bayard, Clay, and Russell, to Mr. Monroe, secretary of state, dated

Ghent, 12th August, 1814.

SIR,

We have the honor to inform you that the British commissioners, lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn, esq. and William Adams, esq. arrived in this city on Saturday evening the 6th instant. The day after their arrival, Mr Baker, their secretary, called upon us to give us notice of the fact, and to propose a meeting at a certain hour on the ensuing day. The place having been agreed upon, we accordingly met at one o'clock, on Monday the 8th instant.

We enclose, herewith, a copy of the full powers exhibited by the British commissioners, at that conference, which was opened, on their part by an expression of the sincere and earnest desire of their government, that the negotiation might result in a solid peace, honorable to both parties. They at the same time declared, that no events which had occurred since the first proposal for this negotiation, had altered the pacific disposition of their government, or varied its views as to the terms upon which it was willing to conclude the peace.

We answered, that we heard these declarations with great satisfaction, and that our government had acceded to the proposal of negotiation with the most sincere desire to put an end to the differences which divided the two countries, and to lay, upon just and liberal grounds, the foundation of a peace which, securing the rights and interests of

both nations should unite them by lasting bonds of amity

The British commissioners then stated the following subjects, as those upon which it appeared to them that the discussions would be likely to turn, and on which they were instructed:

1 The forcible seizure of mariners on board of merchant vessels, and, in connexion with it, the claim of his Britannic majesty to the allegiance of all the native subjects of Great Britain.

We understood them to intimate, that the British government did not propose this point as one which they were particularly desirous of discussing; but that, as it had occupied so prominent a place in the dispute between the two countries, it necessarily attracted notice, and was considered as a subject which would come under discussion.

2. The Indian allies of Great Britain to be included in the pacification, and a definite boundary to be settled for their territory.

The British commissioners stated, that an arrangement upon this point was a *sine qua non*. That they were not authorised to conclude a treaty of peace which did not embrace the Indians, as allies of his Britannic majesty; and that the establishment of a definite boundary of the Indian territory was necessary to secure a permanent peace, not only with the Indians, but also between the United States and Great Britain.

3. A revision of the boundary line between the United States and the adjacent British colonies.

With respect to this point, they expressly disclaimed any intention, on the part of their government, to acquire an increase of territory, and represented the proposed revision as intended merely for the purpose of preventing uncertainty and dispute.

After having stated these three points as subjects

of discussion, the British commissioners added, that before they desired any answer from us, they felt it incumbent upon them to declare, that the British government did not deny the right of the Americans to the fisheries generally, or in the open seas; but that the privileges formerly granted by treaty to the United States, of fishing within the limits of the British jurisdiction, and of landing and drying fish on the shores of the British territories, would not be renewed wthout an equivalent.

The extent of what was considered by them, as waters peculiarly British, was not stated. From the manner in which they brought this subject into view, they seemed to wish us to understand, that they were not anxious that it should be discussed, and that they only intended to give us notice, that these privileges had ceased to exist, and would not be again granted without an equivalent, nor unless we thought proper to provide expressly in the treaty of peace for their renewal.

The British commissioners having stated, that these were all the subjects which they intended to bring forward or to suggest, requested to be informed, whether we were instructed to enter into negotiation on these several points? And, whether there was any amongst these which we thought it unnecessary to bring into the negotiation? And, they desired us to state, on our part, such other subjects as we might intend to propose for discussion in the course of the negotiation. The meeting was then adjourned to the next day, in order to afford us the opportunity of a consultation among ourselves before we gave an answer.

In the course of the evening of the same day, we received your letters of the 25th and 27th of June.

There could be no hesitation on our part in in-

forming the British commissioners that we were not instructed on the subjects of Indian pacification or boundary, and of fisheries; nor did it seem probable, although neither of these points had been stated with sufficient precision in that first verbal conference, that they could be admitted in any shape. We did not wish, however, to prejudge the result, or, by any hasty proceeding, abruptly to break off the negotiation. It was not impossible that, on the subject of the Indians, the British government had received erroneous impressions from the Indian traders in Canada, which our representations might remove; and it appeared, at all events, important to ascertain distinctly the precise intentions of Great Britain on both points. We, therefore, thought it advisable to invite the British commissioners to a general conversation on all the points; stating to them, at the same time, our want of instructions on two of them, and holding out no expectation of the probability of our agreeing to any article respecting these.

At our meeting on the ensuing day we informed the British commissoners, that upon the first and third points proposed by them we were provided with instructions, and we presented as further subjects considered by our government as suitable for discussion:

1st. A definition of blockade; and, as far as might be mutually agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights.

2d. Claims of indemnity in certain cases of capture and seizure.

We then stated that the two subjects, 1st of Indian pacification and boundary, 2d of fisheries, were not embraced by our instructions.

We observed, that as these points had not been heretofore the grounds of any controversy, be-

tween the government of Great Britain and that of the United States, and had not been alluded to by lord Castlereagh, in his letter proposing the negotiation, it could not be expected that they should have been anticipated and made the subject of instructions by our government: that it was natural to be supposed, that our instructions were confined to those subjects upon which differences between the two countries were known to exist; and that the proposition to define, in a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, the boundary of the Indian possessions within our own territories, was new and without example. No such provision had been inserted in the treaty of peace in 1783, nor in any other treaty between the two countries. No such provision had to our knowledge, ever been inserted in any treaty made by Great Britain or any other European power in relation to the same description of people, existing under like circumstances. We would say, however, that it could not be doubted, that peace with the Indians would certainly follow a peace with Great Britain. That we had information, that commissioners had already been appointed to treat with them; that a treaty to that effect might, perhaps, have been already concluded: and that the United States having no interest, nor any motive to continue a separate war against the Indians, there could never be a moment when our government would not be disposed to make peace with them.

We then expressed our wish to receive from the British commissioners a statement of the views and objects of Great Britain upon all the points, and our willingness to discuss them all, in order that, even if no arrangement could be agreed on, upon the points not included in our instructions, the government of the United States might be

possessed of the entire and precise intentions of that of Great Britain, respecting these points, and that the British government might be fully informed of the objections, on the part of the United States, to any such arrangement.

In answer to our remark that these points had not been alluded to by lord Castlereagh, in his letter proposing the negotiation, it was said, that it could not be expected, that in a letter merely intended to invite a negotiation, he should enumerate the topics of discussion, or state the pretensions of his government; since these would depend upon ulterior events, and might arise out of a subsequent state of things.

In reply to our observation, that the proposed stipulation of an Indian boundary was without example in the practice of European nations, it was asserted, that the Indians must, in some sort, be considered as an independent people, since treaties were made with them, both by Great Britain and by the United States; upon which we pointed out the obvious and important difference between the treaties we might make with Indians, living in our territory, and such a treaty as was proposed to be made, respecting them, with a foreign power who had solemnly acknowledged the territory, on which they resided, to be part of the United States.

We were then asked by the British commissioners whether, in case they should enter further upon the discussion of the several points which had been stated, we could expect that it would terminate by some provisional arrangement on the points on which we had no instructions, particularly on that respecting the Indians; which arrangement would be subject to the ratification of our government?

We answered that before the subjects were distinctly understood, and the objects in view more precisely disclosed, we could not decide whether it would be possible to form any satisfactory article on the subject; nor pledge ourselves as to the exercise of a discretion under our powers, even with respect to a provisional agreement. We added that as we should deeply deplore a rupture of the negotiation on any point, it was our anxious desire to employ all possible means to avert an event so serious in its consequences; and that we had not been without hopes, that a discussion might correct the effect of any erroneous information, which the British government might have received, on the subject which they had proposed as a preliminary basis.

We took this opportunity to remark, that no nation observed a policy more liberal and humane towards the Indians, than that pursued by the United States; that our object had been, by all practicable means, to introduce civilization amongst them; that their possessions were secured to them by well defined boundaries; that their persons, lands, and other property were now more effectually protected against violence, or frauds from any quarter, than they had been under any former government; that even our citizens were not allowed to purchase their lands: that when they gave up their title to any portion of their country to the United States, it was by voluntary treaty with our government, who gave them a satisfactory equivalent; and that through these means the United States had succeeded in preserving, since the treaty of Greenville of 1795, an uninterrupted peace of sixteen years, with all the Indian tribes; a period of tranquillity much longer than they were known to have enjoyed heretofore.

It was then expressly stated on our part, that the proposition respecting the Indians was not distinctly understood. We asked whether the pacification and the settlement of a boundary for them were both made a *sine qua non?* Which was answered in the affirmative. The question was then asked the British commissioners, whether the proposed Indian boundary was intended to preclude the United States from the right of purchasing by treaty from the Indians, without the consent of Great Britain, lands lying beyond that boundary? and as a restriction upon the Indians from selling by amicable treaties, lands to the United States, as had been hitherto practised?

To this question, it was first answered by one of the commissioners, that the Indians would not be restricted from selling their lands, but that the United States would be restricted from purchasing them; and on reflection, another of the commissioners stated, that it was intended, that the Indian territories should be a barrier between the British dominions and those of the United States; that both Great Britain and the United States should be restricted from purchasing their lands, but that the Indians might sell them to a third party.

The proposition respecting Indian boundaries thus explained, and connected with the right of sovereignty ascribed to the Indians over the country, amounted to nothing less than a demand of the absolute cession of the rights, both of sovereignty and of soil. We cannot abstain from remarking to you, that the subject of Indian boundary was indistinctly stated when first proposed, and that the explanations were at first obscure, and always given with reluctance: and it was declared, from the first moment, to be a *sine qua*

non, rendering any discussion unprofitable, until it was admitted as a basis. Knowing that we had no power to cede to the Indians any part of our territory, we thought it unnecessary to ask, what probably would not have been answered till the principle was admitted, where the line of demarcation of the Indian country was propose dto be established?

The British commissioners, after having repeated that their instructions on the subject of the Indians were peremptory, stated that, unless we could give some assurance, that our powers would allow us to make at least a provisional arrangement on the subject, any further discussion would be fruitless, and that they must consult their own government on this state of things. They proposed accordingly a suspension of the conferences, until they should have received an answer; it being understood that each party might call a meeting, whenever they had any propositions to submit. They despatched a special messenger the same evening, and we are now waiting for the result.

Before the proposed adjournment took place, it was agreed, that there should be a protocol of the conferences; that a statement should, for that purpose, be drawn up by each party, and that we should meet the next day to compare the statements. We accordingly met again on Wednesday, the 10th instant, and ultimately agreed upon what should constitute the protocol of the conferences A copy of this instrument, we have the honor to transmit with this despatch; and we also enclose a copy of the statement originally drawn up on our part, for the purpose of making known to you the passages to which the British commissioners objected.

Their objection to some of the passages was, that they appeared to be argumentative, and that the object of the protocol was to contain a mere statement of facts. They, however, objected to the insertion of the answer, which they had given to our question, respecting the effect of the proposed Indian boundary; but they agreed to an alteration of their original proposition on that subject, which renders it much more explicit than as stated, either in the first conference, or in their proposed draught of the protocol. They also objected to the insertion of the fact, that they had proposed to adjourn the conferences, until they could obtain further instructions from their government. The return of their messenger may, perhaps, disclose the motive of their reluctance, in that respect.

We have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servants,

(Signed) JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
J. A. BAYARD,
HENRY CLAY,
JONA. RUSSELL.

Draught of original protocol made by the American ministers, of the two first conferences held with the British commissioners.

At a meeting between the commissioners of his Britannic majesty and those of the United States of America, for negotiating and concluding a peace, held at Ghent, 8th August, 1814, the following points were presented by the commissioners on the part of Great Britain, as subjects for discussion:

1. The forcible seizure of mariners on board of merchant vessels, and the claim of allegiance, of

his Britannic majesty, upon all the native born subjects of Great Britain.

2. The Indian allies of Great Britain to be included in the pacification, and a boundary to be settled between the dominions of the Indians and those of the United States. Both parts of this point are considered by the British government as a sine qua non to the conclusion of a treaty.
3. The revision of the boundary line between the territories of the United States, and those of Great Britain, adjoining them in North America.
4. The fisheries—respecting which the British government will not allow the people of the United States the privilege of landing and drying fish within the territorial jurisdiction of Great Britain, without an equivalent.

The American commissioners were requested to say, whether their instructions from their government authorised them to treat upon these several points; and to state, on their part, such other points as they might be further instructed to propose for discussion.

The meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, the 9th August, on which day the commissioners met again.

The American commissioners at this meeting stated, that upon the first and third points proposed by the British commissioners, they were provided with instructions from their government; and that on the second and fourth of those points, there not having existed heretofore any differences between the two governments, they had not been anticipated by the government of the United States, and were, therefore, not provided for in their instructions. That in relation to an Indian pacification, they knew that the government of the United States had appointed commissioners to treat of

peace with the Indians; and that it was not improbable that peace had been made with them.

The American commissioners presented as further points [subjects] considered by the government of the United States, as suitable for discussion:

1. A definition of blockade; and, as far as may be agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights.
2. Certain claims of indemnity to individuals, for captures and seizures, preceding and subsequent to the war.
3. They further stated, that there were various other points to which their instructions extended, which might with propriety be objects of discussion, either in the negotiation of the peace, or in that of a treaty of commerce, which, in the case of a propitious termination of the present conferences, they were likewise authorised to conclude. That for the purpose of facilitating the first and most essential object of peace, they had discarded every subject which was not considered as peculiarly connected with that, and presented only those points, which appeared to be immediately relevant to this negotiation.

The American commissioners expressed their wish to receive from the British commissioners, a statement of the views and objects of Great Britain upon all the points, and their willingness to discuss them all, in order that if no arrangement could be agreed to, upon the points not in their instructions, which would come within the scope of the powers committed to their discretion, the government of the United States might be put in possession of the entire and precise intentions of that of Great Britain, with regard to such points; and that the British government might be fully informed of the objections, on the part of the United States, to any such arrangement.

They, the American commissioners, were asked, whether, if those of Great Britain should enter further upon the discussion, particularly respecting the Indian boundary, the American commissioners could expect, that it would terminate by some provisional arrangement, which they could conclude, subject to the ratification of their government?

They answered, that as any arrangement to which they could agree upon the subject, must be without specific authority from their government, it was not possible for them, previous to discussion, to decide, whether an article, on the subject, could be formed, which would be mutually satisfactory, and to which they should think themselves, under their discretionary powers, justified in acceding.

The British commissioners declined entering upon the discussion, unless the American commissioners would say, that they considered it within their discretion to make a provisional arrangement on the subject, conformable to the view of it prescribed by the British government, and proposed to adjourn the conferences, for the purpose of consulting their own government on this state of things.

The British commissioners were asked, whether it was understood, as an effect of the proposed boundary for the Indians, that the United States would be precluded from the right of purchasing territory from the Indians within that boundary, by amicable treaty with the Indians themselves, without the consent of Great Britain? and whether it was understood to operate as a restriction upon the Indians, from selling by such amicable treaties, lands to the United States, as has been hitherto practised?

They answered, that it was understood that the Indian territories should be a barrier between the British possessions and those of the United States: That the United States and Great Britain should both be restricted from such purchases of lands: but that the Indians would not be restricted from selling them to any third party.

The meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, 10th August.

(Signed) C. HUGHES, Jr.

Secretary to the mission extraordinary.

Protocol of conference, August 8, 1814.

The British and American commissioners having met, their full powers were respectively produced, which were found satisfactory, and copies thereof were exchanged.

The British commissioners stated the following subjects, as those, upon which it appeared to them that the discussions between themselves and the American commissioners would be likely to turn:

1. The forcible seizure of mariners from on board merchant ships on the high seas, and in connection with it, the right of the king of Great Britain to the allegiance of all his native subjects.
2. That the peace be extended to the Indian allies of Great Britain, and that the boundary of their territory be definitively marked out, as a permanent barrier between the dominions of Great Britain and the United States. An arrangement on this subject, to be a *sine qua non* of a treaty of peace.
3. A revision of the boundary line between the British and American territories, with the view to prevent future uncertainty and dispute.

The British commissioners requested information, whether the American commissioners were instructed to enter into negotiation on the above points? But before they desired any answer, they felt it right to communicate the intentions of their government, as to the North American fisheries, viz: That the British government did not intend to grant to the United States gratuitously the privileges formerly granted by treaty to them, of fishing within the limits of the British sovereignty, and of using the shores of the British territories, for purposes connected with the fisheries.

9th August.

The meeting being adjourned to the 9th of August. the commissioners met again on that day.

The American commissioners at this meeting stated, that upon the first and third points proposed by the British commissioners, they were provided with instructions from their government; and that the second and fourth of these points were not provided for in their instructions. That in relation to an Indian pacification, they knew that the government of the United States had appointed commissioners to treat of peace with the Indians; and that it was not improbable peace had been made with them.

The American commissioners presented as further subjects considered by the government of the United States as suitable for discussion:

1. A definition of blockade, and, as far as may be agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights.
2. Certain claims of indemnity to individuals for captures and seizures, preceding and subsequent to the war.
3. They further stated that there were various other points, to which their instructions extend-

ed, which might with propriety be objects of discussion, either in the negotiation of the peace, or in that of a treaty of commerce, which in the case of a propitious termination of the present conferences, they were likewise authorised to conclude. That for the purpose of facilitating the first and most essential object of peace, they had discarded every subject which was not considered as peculiarly connected with that, and presented only those points which appeared to be immediately relevant to this negotiation.

The American commissioners expressed their wish to receive from the British commissioners a statement of the views and objects of Great Britain upon all the points, and their willingness to discuss them all.

They, the American commissioners, were asked, whether, if those of Great Britain should enter further upon this discussion, particularly respecting the Indian boundary, the American commissioners could expect that it would terminate by some provisional arrangement, which they could conclude, subject to the ratification of their government.

They answered, that as any arrangement to which they could agree upon the subject must be without specific authority from their government, it was not possible for them, previous to discussion, to decide whether any article on the subject could be formed which would be mutually satisfactory, and to which they should think themselves, under their discretionary powers, justified in acceding.

The meeting was adjourned.

True copy.

(Signed.) CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, Jr.

Secretary of legation.

Messrs. Adams, Bayard, Clay, Russell, and Gallatin, to Mr. Monroe, secretary of state.

Ghent, 19th August, 1814.

SIR,

Mr. Baker, secretary to the British mission, called upon us to day, at one o'clock, and invited us to a conference to be held at three. This was agreed to, and the British commissioners opened it, by saying that they had received their further instructions this morning, and had not lost a moment in requesting a meeting for the purpose of communicating the decision of their government. It is proper to notice that lord Castlereagh had arrived last night in this city, whence, it is said, he will depart to-morrow, on his way to Brussels and Vienna.

The British commissioners stated that their government had felt some surprise that we were not instructed respecting the Indians, as it could not have been expected that they would leave their allies, in their comparatively weak situation, exposed to our resentment. Great Britain might justly have supposed that the American government would have furnished us with instructions authorising us to agree to a positive article on the subject; but the least she could demand was that we should sign a provisional article admitting the principle, subject to the ratification of our government; so that, if it should be ratified, the treaty should take effect; and if not, that it should be null and void. On our assent or refusal to admit such an article would depend the continuance or suspension of the negotiation.

As we had represented that the proposition made by them, on that subject, was not sufficiently explicit, their government had directed them to give us every necessary explanation, and to state

distinctly the basis which must be considered as an indispensable preliminary.

It was a *sine qua non* that the Indians should be included in the pacification, and, as incident thereto, that the boundaries of their territory should be permanently established. Peace with the Indians was a subject so simple, as to require no comment. With respect to the boundary which was to divide their territory from that of the United States, the object of the British government was, that the Indians should remain as a permanent barrier between our western settlements and the adjacent British provinces, to prevent them from being conterminous to each other; and that neither the United States nor Great Britain should ever hereafter have the right to purchase or acquire any part of the territory thus recognized as belonging to the Indians. With regard to the extent of the Indian territory and the boundary line, the British government would propose the lines of the Greenville treaty, as a proper basis, subject, however, to discussion and modifications. We stated that the Indian territory, according to these lines, would comprehend a great number of American citizens; not less, perhaps, than a hundred thousand: and asked, what was the intention of the British government respecting them, and under whose government they would fall? It was answered, that those settlements would be taken into consideration when the line became a subject of discussion; but that such of the inhabitants as would ultimately be included within the Indian territory, must make their own arrangements and provide for themselves.

The British commissioners here said, that considering the importance of the question we had to decide (that of agreeing to a provisional arti-

cle) their government had thought it right, that we should also be fully informed of its views, with respect to the proposed revision of the boundary line between the dominions of Great Britain and the United States.

1. Experience had proved that the joint possession of the lakes, and a right common to both nations to keep up a naval force on them, necessarily produced collisions, and rendered peace insecure. As Great Britain could not be supposed to expect to make conquests in that quarter, and as that province was essentially weaker than the United States, and exposed to invasion, it was necessary for its security that Great Britain should require that the United States should hereafter keep no armed naval force on the western lakes, from lake Ontario to lake Superior, both inclusive; that they should not erect any fortified or military post or establishment on the shores of those lakes; and that they should not maintain those which were already existing. This must, they said, be considered as a moderate demand, since Great Britain, if she had not disclaimed the intention of any increase of territory, might, with propriety, have asked a cession of the adjacent American shores. The commercial navigation and intercourse would be left on the same footing as heretofore. It was expressly stated, (in answer to a question we asked,) that Great Britain was to retain the right of having an armed naval force on those lakes, and of holding military posts and establishments on their shores.

2. The boundary line west of lake Superior, and thence to the Mississippi, to be revised; and the treaty right of Great Britain to the navigation of the Mississippi, to be continued. When asked, whether they did not mean the line from the lake

of the Woods to the Mississippi, the British commissioners repeated, that they meant the line from lake Superior to that river.

3. A direct communication from Halifax and the province of New Brunswick to Quebec, to be secured to Great Britain. In answer to our question, in what manner this was to be effected? we were told that it must be done by a cession to Great Britain of that portion of the district of Maine (in the state of Massachusetts) which intervenes between New Brunswick and Quebec, and prevents that direct communication.

Reverting to the proposed provisional article, respecting the Indian pacification and boundary, the British commissioners concluded by stating to us, that if the conferences should be suspended by our refusal to agree to such an article, without having obtained further instructions from our government, Great Britain would not consider herself bound to abide by the terms which she now offered, but would be at liberty to vary and regulate her demands according to subsequent events, and in such manner as the state of the war, at the time of renewing the negotiations, might warrant.

We asked whether the statement made, respecting the proposed revision of the boundary line between the United States and the dominions of Great Britain, embraced all the objects she meant to bring forward for discussion, and what were, particularly, her views with respect to Moose island, and such other islands in the bay of Passamaquoddy, as had been in our possession till the present war, but had been lately captured? We were answered, that those islands, belonging of right to Great Britain, (as much so, one of the commissioners said, as Northamptonshire,) they would certainly be kept by her, and were not even supposed to be an object of discussion.

From the forcible manner in which the demand, that the United States should keep no naval armed force on the lakes, nor any military post on their shores, had been brought forward, we were induced to inquire whether this condition was also meant as a *sine qua non*? To this, the British commissioners declined giving a positive answer. They said that they had been sufficiently explicit; that they had given us one *sine qua non*, and when we had disposed of that, it would be time enough to give us an answer as to another.

We then stated, that, considering the nature and importance of the communication made this day, we wished the British commissioners to reduce their proposals to writing before we gave them an answer. This they agreed to, and promised to send us an official note without delay.

We need hardly say, that the demands of Great Britain will receive, from us, an unanimous and decided negative. We do not deem it necessary to detain the John Adams for the purpose of transmitting to you the official notes which may pass on the subject, and close the negotiation. And we have felt it our duty immediately to apprise you, by this hasty, but correct, sketch of our last conference, that there is not, at present, any hope of peace.

We have the honor to be, sir, with perfect respect, your obedient servants.

(Signed.) JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
J. A. BAYARD,
H. CLAY,
JONA. RUSSELL,
ALBERT GALLATIN.

P. S. August 20, 1814. We have this moment received the note of the British commissioners, which had been promised to us, bearing date yes-

terday, a copy of which we have the honor to enclose.

Note of the British commissioners.

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of his Britannic majesty, do themselves the honor of acquainting the plenipotentiaries of the United States, that they have communicated to their court, the result of the conference, which they had the honor of holding with them upon the 9th instant, in which they stated that they were unprovided with any specific instructions, as to comprehending the Indian nations in a treaty of peace to be made with Great Britain, and as to defining a boundary to the Indian territory.

The undersigned are instructed to acquaint the plenipotentiaries of the United States, that his majesty's government having, at the outset of the negotiation, with a view to the speedy restoration of peace, reduced as far as possible the number of points to be discussed, and having professed themselves willing to forego, on some important topics, any stipulation to the advantage of Great Britain, cannot but feel some surprise that the government of the United States should not have furnished their plenipotentiaries with instructions upon those points which could hardly fail to come under discussion.

Under the inability of the American plenipotentiaries, to conclude any article upon the subject of Indian pacification and Indian boundary, which shall bind the government of the United States, his majesty's government conceive that they cannot give a better proof of their sincere desire for the restoration of peace, than by professing their willingness to accept a provisional article upon those

heads, in the event of the American plenipotentiaries considering themselves authorised to accede to the general principles, upon which such an article ought to be founded. With a view to enable the American plenipotentiaries to decide, how far the conclusion of such an article is within the limit of their general discretion, the undersigned are directed to state fully and distinctly, the bases upon which alone Great Britain sees any prospect of advantage in the continuance of the negotiations at the present time.

The undersigned have already had the honor of stating to the American plenipotentiaries, that in considering the points above referred to, as a sine qua non of any treaty of peace, the view of the British government is the permanent tranquillity and security of the Indian nations, and the prevention of those jealousies and irritations, to which the frequent alteration of the Indian limits has heretofore given rise.

For this purpose it is indispensably necessary, that the Indian nations who have been, during the war, in alliance with Great Britain, should, at the termination of the war, be included in the pacification.

It is equally necessary, that a definite boundary should be assigned to the Indians, and that the contracting parties should guarantee the integrity of their territory, by a mutual stipulation, not to acquire by purchase, or otherwise, any territory within the specified limits. The British government are willing to take, as the basis of an article on this subject, those stipulations of the treaty of Greenville, subject to modifications, which relate to a boundary line.

As the undersigned are desirous of stating every point in connexion with the subject, which may

reasonably influence the decision of the American plenipotentiaries in the exercise of their discretion, they avail themselves of this opportunity to repeat what they have already stated, that Great Britain desires the revision of the frontier between her North American dominions and those of the United States, not with any view to an acquisition of territory as such, but for the purpose of securing her possessions, and preventing future disputes.

The British government consider the lakes, from lake Ontario to lake Superior, both inclusive, to be the natural military frontier of the British possessions in North America. As the weaker power on the North American continent, the least capable of acting offensively, and the most exposed to sudden invasion, Great Britain considers the military occupation of these lakes as necessary to the security of her dominions. A boundary line equally dividing these waters, with a right on each nation to arm, both upon the lakes and upon their shores, is calculated to create a contest for naval ascendency in peace as well as in war. The power which occupies these lakes should, as a necessary result, have the military occupation of both shores

In furtherance of this object, the British government is prepared to propose a boundary: But as this might be misconstrued as an intention to extend their possessions to the southward of the lakes, which is by no means the object they have in view, they are disposed to leave the territorial limits undisturbed, and as incident to them, the free commercial navigation of the lakes, provided that the American government will stipulate not to maintain, or construct, any fortfications upon, or within a limited distance of the shores, or maintain or construct, any armed vessel upon the lakes in

question, or in the rivers which empty themselves into the same.

If this can be adjusted, there will then remain for discussion the arrangement of the north western boundary between lake Superior and the Mississippi, the free navigation of that river, and such a variation of the line of frontier as may secure a direct communication between Quebec and Halifax.

The undersigned trust, that the full statement which they have made of the views and objects of the British government in requiring the pacification of the Indian nations, and a permanent limit to their territories, will enable the American plenipotentiaries to conclude a provisional article upon the basis above stated. Should they feel it necessary to refer to the government of the United States for further instructions, the undersigned feel it incumbent upon them to acquaint the American plenipotentiaries, that their government cannot be precluded, by any thing that has passed, from varying the terms at present proposed, in such a manner as the state of the war, at the time of resuming the conferences, may, in their judgment, render adviseable.

The undersigned avail themselves of this occasion to renew to the plenipotentiaries of the United States, the assurance of their high consideration.

(Signed) GAMBIER,
HENRY GOULBURN,
WILLIAM ADAMS.

Ghent, 19th August, 1814.

SPCL E 358 U58
C. 1
3 9157 00168204 9

174713

BROCK UNIVERSITY
ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO

SP.CL.
E
358
U58

LIBRARY

FOR USE IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ONLY

L-07